
Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the Community Prevention Grants Program model. Also discussed are the implementation and design of the national evaluation.

Community Prevention Grants Program Model

The Community Prevention Grants Program is a federal grants program that funds collaborative, community-based delinquency prevention efforts guided by six underlying principles: comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches, research foundation for planning, local control and decisionmaking, leveraging of resources and systems, evaluation to monitor success, and a long-term perspective. In the Community Prevention Grants Program, these fundamental principles combine to form a strategic approach to reducing juvenile delinquency. They also provide a sound framework for the program's practical application.

The key features of the Community Prevention Grants Program—specifically, its risk- and protection-focused approach, research-based planning, communitywide interventions, and local flexibility—make it a distinctive initiative. The program is intended to help communities support strong and healthy families and, ultimately, to result in fewer youth in the juvenile justice system.

Established by Congress in the 1992 reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (subsequently, the Act), the Community Prevention Grants Program is a comprehensive, nationwide approach to reducing juvenile delinquency and related adolescent problem behaviors. It is based on a risk- and protection-focused model of prevention that asserts that, in order to reduce juvenile delinquency, communities must reduce the risk factors identified as predictors of adolescent problem behaviors. The model also asserts that communities must enhance known protective factors (e.g., social bonding, healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior, and opportunities to contribute to the community) that provide buffers against risk factors (Hawkins and Weis, 1985). The Community Prevention Grants Program is unique in that it supports the development and implementation of risk- and protection-focused prevention strategies that meet the discrete circumstances and risk conditions of local communities throughout the nation.

The Community Prevention Grants Program's structure is designed to provide communities with a guiding framework for building healthy communities in an objective, systematic, and comprehensive manner. As outlined in the Program Guideline (*Federal Register*, Vol. 59, No. 146), Title V awards funding to participating states and territories, which then make subgrants to qualified units of local government for delinquency prevention programming. The 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories (subsequently, the states) are eligible to apply for program funds, provided they have both a state agency designated by the Chief Executive under Section 299 (c) of the Act and a State Advisory Group (SAG). State awards are based on a formula determined by the state's population of youth below the maximum age limit for original juvenile court delinquency jurisdiction. With approval from the SAG, each state agency awards subgrants to units of local government (e.g., communities) through a competitive process.

To be eligible to apply for a subgrant from the state, a community must first:

- ❖ Receive SAG certification of compliance with the Act’s core protections established under the Title II, Part B, Formula Grants Program.
- ❖ Convene or designate a local prevention policy board, comprising 15 to 21 individuals representing a balance of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, private business and industry, and youth and parents.
- ❖ Submit a 3-year delinquency prevention plan describing the prevalence of identified community risk and protective factors and how they will be addressed.
- ❖ Provide a 50-cents-on-the-dollar match, either in cash or in kind, of the subgrant award amount.

SAGs are authorized to establish additional eligibility criteria for subgrant awards on the basis of need or other program-related criteria.

Since 1994, federal resources provided through the Community Prevention Grants Program have helped more than 1,200 communities in 49 states and territories implement this model of juvenile delinquency prevention, reduce risk factors for youth, and enhance protective factors.

Underlying Principles

The Community Prevention Grants Program provides states and communities with both funding and the guiding framework for reducing risk factors, enhancing protective factors, and decreasing the occurrence of juvenile problem behaviors. Specifically, the program integrates the following six principles to form a comprehensive and strategic approach to reducing juvenile delinquency:

- ❖ **Comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches.** The Community Prevention Grants Program requires communities to either designate or form a multidisciplinary prevention policy board that includes representatives from across the community (e.g., representatives from human services agencies, education, justice, law enforcement, public and mental health agencies, local government, religious institutions, and private industry). The program also promotes comprehensive risk reduction through the implementation of research-based prevention programs and services that address multiple risk factors.
- ❖ **Research foundation for planning.** The Community Prevention Grants Program requires each potential grantee community to conduct a thorough, data-driven assessment of its local community to identify risk and protective factors, existing resources, and gaps in services for youth and families. Communities use their findings to select proven or promising research-based prevention strategies to implement as part of their local Title V initiative.
- ❖ **Local control and decisionmaking.** The Community Prevention Grants Program allows each state to establish its own process for determining the number and amount of grant awards to individual communities. In addition, each local community that receives Title V funds is allowed flexibility in

planning, developing, and implementing a comprehensive delinquency prevention plan that best meets its unique risk- and protection-focused profile.

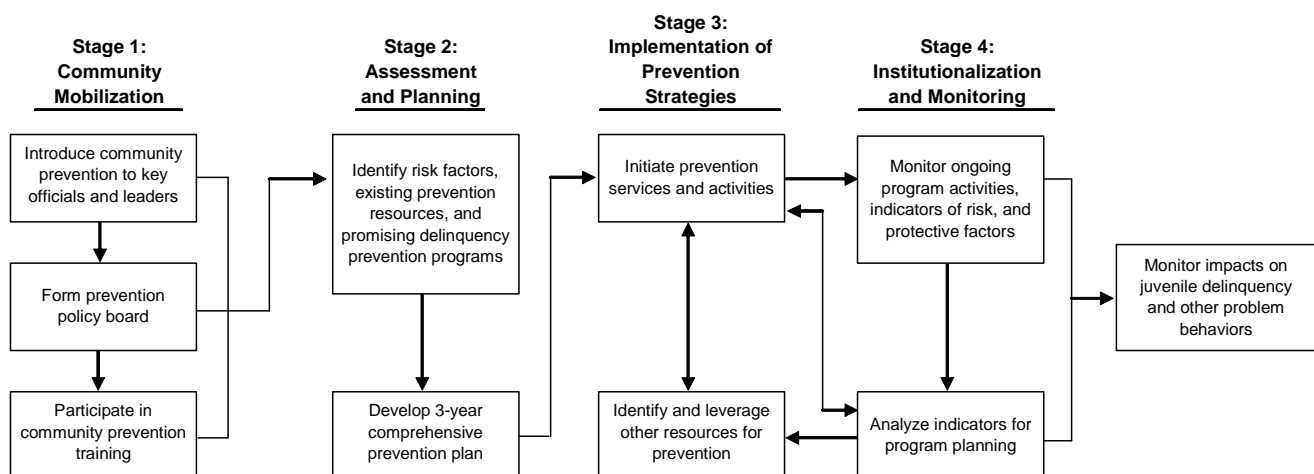
- ❖ **Leveraging of resources and systems.** The Community Prevention Grants Program requires local grantees to secure a 50-percent match of resources if a match is not provided by the state. This requirement provides the incentive communities need to secure additional, much-needed local resources. As “seed” money, the awards made by the Community Prevention Grants Program are intended to provide communities with a financial base for prevention efforts, one that communities can eventually sustain on their own.
- ❖ **Evaluation to monitor program success.** The Community Prevention Grants Program supports communities in conducting evaluation activities. Evaluation activities allow local stakeholders to assess progress, refine the community’s prevention strategies over time, and optimize effectiveness.
- ❖ **Long-term perspective.** The Community Prevention Grants Program does not propose quick-fix solutions to longstanding juvenile problem behaviors. Instead, the program’s structure and guidelines help communities think about the long term. The 3-year delinquency prevention plan—a trademark of the Community Prevention Grants Program—is intended to move communities away from historical “hit-and-miss” approaches to problem solving and toward long-term strategic community planning and change.

These program principles are intended to guide collaborative, community-based prevention efforts.

Implementation

To help communities make the transition from theory to action, the Community Prevention Grants Program is built on four key implementation stages—community mobilization, assessment and planning, implementation of prevention strategies, and institutionalization and monitoring—with each stage following and building on the previous one (figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Implementation Stages of the Title V Community Prevention Grants Program



At each successive stage, communities acquire skills and achieve certain goals that are designed ultimately to strengthen their capacity to implement and sustain comprehensive delinquency prevention strategies. The specific activities and goals of each stage are as follows:

- ❖ **Community mobilization.** This stage has two phases. In the first phase, key community leaders are convened to participate in community team training. Bringing these leaders together gains local support for a comprehensive, community-based prevention strategy by introducing them to the principles and benefits of risk- and protection-focused delinquency prevention and long-term prevention planning. In the second phase, the community's prevention policy board—designated by the local leaders—attends a 3-day workshop. The community data collection training is designed to teach community members how to conduct a community risk and resource assessment that includes data collection and analysis.
- ❖ **Assessment and planning.** This stage has two key components. First, applying skills learned during the community data collection training workshop, members of the prevention policy board conduct a risk and resource assessment in their community to identify local risk and protective factors, existing prevention program resources, and resource gaps. Next, using the results of this assessment, board members work together to develop a comprehensive, 3-year delinquency prevention plan that outlines the community's risk- and protection-factor profile and identifies the research-based strategies the community will implement to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors. The plan also specifies how the community will obtain and coordinate existing and future financial and program resources. To help communities choose effective and research-based prevention strategies, board members attend a community delinquency prevention plan development training session. This training familiarizes communities with a wide variety of programs and strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors. Once the 3-year plan is completed, it will serve as the community's application to the state for a Community Prevention Grant Program subgrant award.
- ❖ **Implementation of prevention strategies.** After receiving a subgrant award, communities are ready to implement their delinquency prevention plans. Because each community assessment yields different needs and resources, the type, scope, and combination of programs and services implemented varies from community to community. For example, one community's risk and resource assessment may indicate the need for new afterschool recreation services and youth leadership development activities, while another community may find a need to improve the coordination of its existing resources to serve a target population more effectively. In line with its guiding principles, the Community Prevention Grants Program does not emphasize the implementation of new services. Instead, it first encourages the integration and coordination of existing services and prevention efforts and then, when necessary, the implementation of new, promising, and effective programs and services.
- ❖ **Institutionalization and monitoring.** Once prevention programs, resources, and data collection systems are in place and operating, communities are required to monitor program activities to track progress toward chosen goals and objectives. Communities must have an evaluation plan that includes methods for ongoing assessment of program activities and outcomes and for periodic reevaluation of risk and protective factors.

Together, the six underlying principles and the four implementation stages give rise to a dynamic, national prevention initiative, one that does not restrict participating communities to a prescribed intervention, but rather provides a guiding framework and the tools communities need to plan and implement risk- and protection-focused prevention strategies. As a result, the more than 1,400 communities that have received Title V funds in the last 9 years are implementing prevention strategies that share a number of common characteristics, but also vary greatly in the characteristics, magnitude, scope, and intensity of their interventions.

Understanding and implementing the Title V model have proved challenging for many communities. Title V represents the first time some communities have engaged in a structured, data-driven planning process, which can pose a challenge even for communities that have previously engaged in a similar process. To help communities implement the Title V model effectively, OJJDP incorporates training and technical assistance, described in detail in the following section, into the program model.

Training and Technical Assistance

The Title V model assumes that communities receiving substantial training and technical assistance will implement more effective, comprehensive prevention planning processes than those that receive less support. To facilitate ongoing support to communities for implementing the Title V program model effectively, OJJDP has offered training and technical assistance to states and communities across the country since 1994, the first year Title V funds became available. This training and technical assistance includes pre-award assistance to help potential Title V grantees develop the knowledge and skills necessary to negotiate each stage of the comprehensive, risk- and protection-focused planning process successfully.

Additional, individualized training and technical assistance became available to communities in 1998. OJJDP supports two training and technical assistance vehicles specific to the Community Prevention Grants Program: the Title V Training Curriculum and individualized technical assistance provided under a broad-based technical assistance contract offered in coordination with OJJDP state representatives.

Title V Training Curriculum

Though training and technical assistance have always been an integral part of the Title V initiative, the training model and training provider have changed over the course of the Program. From 1994 through 2000, trainers from Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., of Seattle, WA, delivered a training curriculum called *Communities That Care*. Grounded in 30 years of research, the curriculum was designed to provide communities with the skills necessary to progress successfully through the four implementation stages of the Title V model. Although communities were not required to apply the *Communities That Care* approach, the strategy was well suited to implementation of the Title V model. Many communities adopted it, including communities in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Hawaii, three of the national evaluation states.

The training provided by Developmental Research and Programs was initially conducted in two phases. The first session, key leader orientation, was a 1-day workshop for the major policymakers, business leaders, and high-level agency executives in communities interested in applying for Title V funds. The primary purposes of the workshop were to familiarize the community's leadership with the theoretical

basis of risk-focused prevention and to secure the commitment of community leadership to a long-term, comprehensive, risk-focused prevention strategy. The second session, risk and resource assessment training, was a 3-day, hands-on workshop for local prevention policy board members and staff who were to be involved in the development of the local delinquency prevention plans. This training taught communities how to apply the research framework of risk and protective factors to the assessment of community risks and resources.

In 1999, OJJDP made a third session, promising approaches, available to the states to help communities improve the match between prevention approaches and their unique community risk- and protective-factor profile. During this session, which was also part of the Communities That Care curriculum, community teams learned about prevention programs and system change strategies that had demonstrated effectiveness in reducing risk factors. They also learned how to assess the suitability of these programs and strategies for their communities and to create action plans for enhancing existing resources and implementing new programs.

In April 2000, OJJDP awarded a contract to a new Title V training and technical assistance provider, Developmental Services Group, Inc. Whereas the initial Title V training curriculum had been based primarily on a risk-focused approach to delinquency prevention, the new training curriculum, developed with input from state juvenile justice specialists and Title V prevention coordinators, was intended to present a more integrated, balanced approach to prevention planning and implementation by combining risk- and protection-focused prevention.

Between April and July 2000, OJJDP and Developmental Services Group conducted four regional focus groups with more than 30 juvenile justice specialists and state Title V coordinators to gain insight into the effectiveness and applicability of past training sessions. The key recommendations were that the training curriculum be made more flexible, so it could meet specific needs of participating communities, and that the training help community members engage in the Title V process more effectively. As a result, the curriculum's first training session was shortened and, rather than being taught at a regional level, was brought to each individual community.

Focus group participants also made other suggestions. First was that the training curriculum include a variety of risk- and protection-focused models, including models based on resiliency and assets. In response, the new training curriculum includes asset and resiliency prevention models in addition to the risk- and protection-focused approach. Participants also suggested that community members could benefit from a tool to assist with the sometimes daunting task of collecting data for the risk and resource assessment. In response, an easy-to-use *Community Data Collection Manual* was developed. Finally, participants suggested that more examples of successful, research-based prevention strategies be provided. To accommodate this request, Developmental Services Group developed a science-based Model Programs Guide that presents program, evaluation, and contact information about more than 250 programs that meet selection criteria for effectiveness.

On the basis of these recommendations, a new training curriculum was made available to communities in 2001. It includes three training sessions for communities interested in applying for Title V funds:

- ❖ The first session, community team orientation, is conducted in each community interested in applying for Title V funds. The goal of this half-day training is to bring together key local leaders

and all members of the prevention policy board and give them an overview of the Title V model and its components, focusing on topics such as community mobilization, team building, and collection of data on state and local risk and protective factors.

- ❖ The second session, community data collection and analysis, is a 2-day training designed to help participants review, analyze, interpret, prioritize, and present their collected risk- and protective-factor data. Community members also learn how to assess their resources, identify gaps in their resources, and craft a community profile and an assessment report, which form the basis of their Title V delinquency prevention plan.
- ❖ The third training session, community plan and program development, centers on the development of the 3-year comprehensive delinquency prevention plan. The 1-day training accommodates multiple teams of six to eight participants who represent critical sectors of their communities. It focuses specifically on developing a community plan, including selecting research-based effective and promising prevention strategies, assessing the suitability of programs for the community, developing measurable goals and objectives, and developing a timetable for implementation.

Of the 11 communities that participated in the national evaluation, 8 had at least one person who was associated with the initiative attend training. The two Nebraska communities were not represented in training sessions, and one of the Virginia communities, having been trained in a similar community planning model under a different initiative, opted not to have a representative attend the Title V training. The Hawaii community sent two individuals to the training, the project coordinator and a prevention policy board member, but only after the grant had been awarded. Most frequently, those attending training were project directors or coordinators, and, in communities where more than one individual attended, board members were generally in attendance. Communities who participated in training were represented at the key leader orientation, the risk and resource assessment, or both.¹ The details regarding training participation and its effect on communities' ability to implement the Title V model effectively are presented in the case study presentations (see chapters 2–7).

Developmental Services Group also provides individualized training to meet states' and communities' specific needs. For example, when a state or community has specific technical assistance needs, or if the series of three training sessions does not fit a state's particular funding cycle, customized training and technical assistance are offered.

OJJDP also provides other technical assistance to states and communities on an as-needed basis. Title V subgrantees can access training in a variety of interest areas and technical topics through their OJJDP state representative. Technical assistance activities under Title V include strengthening a community's conceptual understanding of risk- and protection-focused prevention and teaching communities how to maintain and build on existing collaborative relationships.

Training Challenges

Although the effect that training has had on Title V grantees has not been evaluated empirically, anecdotal reports gathered from state juvenile justice specialists, Title V coordinators, and local

¹ The national evaluation communities attended training during the period of time when Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., was the training contractor for OJJDP.

community members indicate that training has been effective in teaching community members the skills necessary to effectively understand and implement the Title V model. Despite the reported value of training, however, some issues pose a challenge to state representatives and community members alike. The following paragraphs describe these challenges, and chapters 2 through 7, the case study presentations, explore the implications these challenges have for the national evaluation communities.

Logistics at the State Level

For training to be effective, it must be offered during times that maximize participation (e.g., not in the summer months or during major holiday seasons) and that coincide with states' funding cycles. Unfortunately, in some states the training is offered months before the initiation of the state Title V request for proposals. By the time the request for proposals is announced, community members have forgotten what they learned in training or must scramble to pull together materials they have not thought about for months. In other states, training is not offered each year, even though a Title V request for proposals is announced annually. As a result, grantees who apply for funds during the years when training is not offered must negotiate the Title V planning process without the benefit of training. Also, some Title V grantees attend training after being awarded a grant, though the training information is of particular value during the planning phase of the initiative, when assessment activities are undertaken and the 3-year plan is developed.

In addition to the problems with timing, the logistics of training can be overwhelming to a sometimes already overburdened juvenile justice specialist or Title V coordinator. Selecting dates, finding a convenient location, distributing announcements, handling questions and registrations, and coordinating each aspect of the training with the training provider can be very labor intensive, and add to the burden of a staff that may already be overseeing several grant programs and also conducting their usual administrative duties.

Mandated Attendance

States mandating participation in training as a pre-requisite for submitting a Title V grant application is another factor that affects whether understanding and implementing the Title V model pose a challenge to state representatives and communities. The national evaluation team found that states that mandate training are more committed to making sure it is available to all potential grantees, and that they offer at least one full training curriculum each year. Of the six states participating in the Title V national evaluation, only two—Pennsylvania and Vermont—require participation in training as a prerequisite for submitting an application. Although the other national evaluation states encourage participation, they permit communities to submit a Title V grant application without having attended training. Applicants can generally expect to receive a Title V subgrant as long as their proposals meet the criteria and sufficient funds are available. However, communities that do not receive training are often less familiar with the Title V model and are more likely to have difficulty implementing it.

Attendance at Training

Who attends training is important, as is the consistency in attendance across the three training sessions. Because each training session builds on concepts taught in the previous session, having at least some of the same individuals attend all three sessions is important. Because training is offered before grants are

awarded, however, the individuals who attend the training sessions, such as key community leaders and prevention policy board members, are sometimes not the same individuals who are involved in the initiative's later stages, such as implementation and monitoring. When they are not, a disconnect in information often exists between the individuals who planned the initiative and those who implement it, and the implementers are sometimes distanced from the goals and objectives of the overall initiative. The national evaluation team found that some program staff who were implementing prevention strategies were not even aware they were part of a larger initiative. Pennsylvania is the only state in the national evaluation that requires all communities to have at least one person attend all three training sessions.

Staff and Prevention Policy Board Turnover

Because they typically involve key community and agency leaders, who tend to be very busy and even over-committed, local prevention policy boards sometimes experience turnover. Also, many of the national evaluation communities encountered turnover among project directors and coordinators. When these are the same individuals who attended training or have become familiar with the Title V initiative, their departure can create information gaps that challenge the capacity of the board or project director to implement and monitor the Title V model effectively over time. Turnover not only challenges the cohesiveness of a group, it also shifts the knowledge base of the effort.

Training Processes

Despite the challenges described above, by providing states and communities the training resources necessary to develop and implement comprehensive, collaborative prevention efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency and related problem behaviors, OJJDP has helped states and communities learn and apply new and effective methods for creating and sustaining positive community change. Across the country, training and technical assistance have helped thousands of communities, including some of the national evaluation communities. More than 1,400 communities have received Title V funds and are implementing local delinquency prevention strategies. These communities share a number of characteristics, but they also vary greatly in the magnitude, scope, and intensity of their initiatives. The effectiveness with which training and technical assistance are able to help different types of communities gives Title V grantees the flexibility they need to address their unique risk- and protective-factor profiles.

National Evaluation of the Community Prevention Grants Program

The key features of the Community Prevention Grants Program—its risk- and protection-focused approach, communitywide interventions, and local flexibility—make it a distinctive initiative aimed at establishing communities with strong and healthy families and fewer youth entering the juvenile justice system. Implementing Title V on a large scale has created a significant opportunity to evaluate the program's effectiveness in reducing juvenile crime, delinquency, and other adolescent problem behaviors.

However, many key features of the program (i.e., its comprehensiveness, locally determined prevention components, and dynamic planning and programming) and differences among communities also pose special challenges for Title V model evaluation, at both the local and national levels. The implementation of the national evaluation design and the modifications required so that local subgrantees could participate fully in the evaluation process are described below.

National Evaluation Design

Traditional experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation methodologies rely on the ability to isolate recipients of a well-specified treatment, or intervention, and compare their outcomes to an equivalent group that did not receive the treatment or intervention. In a comprehensive, community-based initiative like the Community Prevention Grants Program, however, varying members of a community are targeted for an overlapping array of prevention strategies and activities that are assumed to be interdependent and only yield the desired end result collectively over an extended period of time. The difficulties of evaluating such initiatives have received concentrated attention in recent years.

In their 1995 publication *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, Connell et al. identify six attributes of comprehensive community-based initiatives that make them challenging to evaluate. These attributes also characterize the Community Prevention Grants Program evaluation:

- ❖ **Horizontal complexity.** Interventions cut across multiple agencies, programs, and practices.
- ❖ **Vertical complexity.** A range of prevention strategies and activities involving multiple target groups (individual, family, school, peer groups, communities) is implemented and intended to be synergistic.
- ❖ **Contextual issues.** Local political, economic, and social context variables are expected to have major effects on desired outcomes.
- ❖ **Flexible and evolving prevention strategies, activities, and programs.** Prevention strategies, activities, and programs are not pre-specified; they are designed to be flexible to fit each community's unique risk- and protective-factor profile and to respond over time to changes in community risk and protective factors, resources, and program effectiveness.
- ❖ **Broad range of outcomes.** Although delinquency prevention is always the desired long-range outcome, short-term and intermediate outcomes include a wide range of risk and protective factors for specific prevention strategies, activities, and programs.
- ❖ **Absence of comparison or control groups.** Appropriate within-community control groups are extremely difficult to identify because all residents are targeted. In addition, finding adequate comparison communities is highly problematic because of a host of factors, ranging from in/out migration and spillover effects to the uncontrollability of contextual effects and the difficulty in measuring the degree to which similar strategies, activities, and programs may be occurring in comparison sites.

The grant award procedures in the states that receive Title V funds do not lend themselves to the random assignment of communities to program or control conditions. The selection of a matched community

comparison group required by a quasi-experimental design would dictate matching communities on characteristics relevant to the Community Prevention Grants Program outcomes. This process would be extremely complex because of the number of relevant identified characteristics that would be matched and the potential for omitting important but unidentified characteristics.

On the other hand, the Title V program offers several evaluation advantages. First, where the initiative has been attempted, a large number of communities are funded each year and across years. In 2002, the number of Title V communities nationwide was estimated at more than 1,400. Thus, at any given time, numerous opportunities exist to assess how well the Title V model holds up in practice. There is also the potential to create a large-enough sample to use communities as the unit of analysis. In addition, the Title V model provides a common conceptual framework for assessing implementation and outcomes, and thus facilitates the development of common measures across sites. Finally, the Title V program is meant to offer considerable support for data collection and other activities directed toward evaluation. By definition, the Title V approach requires communities to collect and analyze data on risk and protective factors and to use the data to select relevant interventions. It also encourages the use of program effectiveness data to select or modify interventions. In addition, at the time the initial design was conceived, many states were using funds or helping communities find outside resources to build evaluation capacity at the local level. In many states, however, Title V grantees were not aware that these resources were available and therefore did not take advantage of them. In some cases, state representatives were just beginning to understand the kinds of training issues emerging with implementation of the Title V model, including the ongoing analysis of risk factor data, and so were not able to respond proactively to local evaluation issues. In fact, little or no evaluation capacity existed at the local level, and, in most cases, communities were not fully engaged in tracking risk factors or program outcomes.

Initial Design

Developed and approved by OJJDP in 1997, the initial evaluation design was based on input from leading experts in the design and conduct of evaluations of comprehensive program initiatives. Focused on capturing information that would be helpful in testing and refining the Title V model, the evaluation was designed to use as much of the data available nationally as possible, but to control expense by minimizing the level of data collection required. To facilitate the conceptualization of the small, incremental links between Title V activities and outcomes, the collection of qualitative data at a relatively small number of sites was proposed. Quantitative methods were proposed to test key links for a larger number of sites.

The national evaluation of the Community Prevention Grants Program was intended to examine the comprehensive, locally defined, risk- and protection-focused model's viability and effectiveness in preventing juvenile delinquency. Very broadly, the design was developed to address the following research questions:

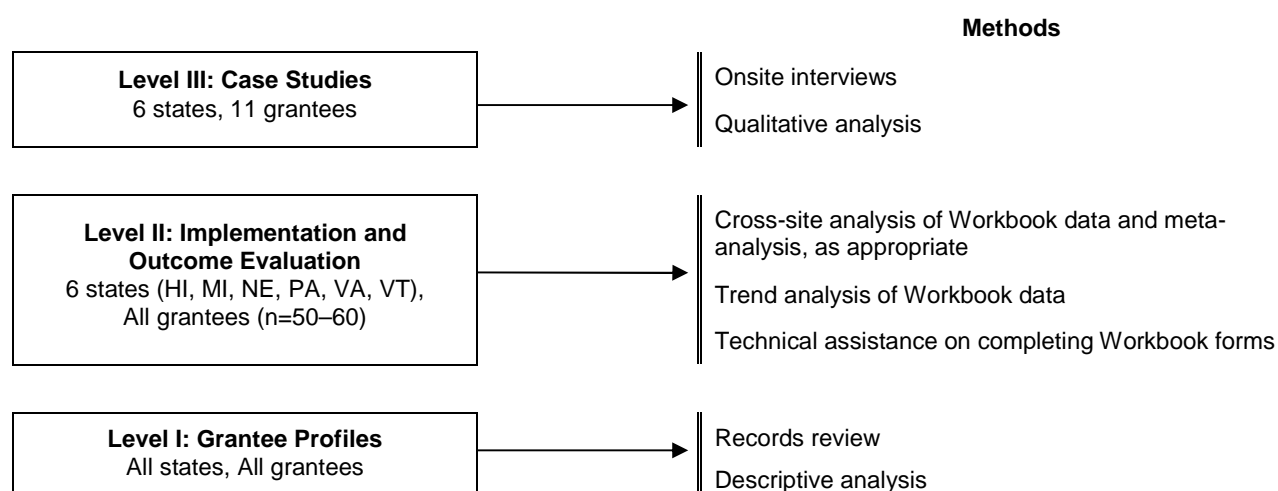
- ❖ What is the impact of the Community Prevention Grants Program on risk factors, protective factors, and juvenile problem behavior?
- ❖ What factors and activities lead to the effective implementation of the Community Prevention Grants Program model and to positive program outcomes?

As originally conceptualized, the evaluation consisted of three interrelated levels:

- ❖ **Level I.** A basic profile of Community Prevention Grants Program communities in the participating states and territories (e.g., number and amount of awards, participation in training and technical assistance). This information provides a general description of Community Prevention Grants Program funds and activities nationwide. The sample at Level I comprises all grantees in all states.
- ❖ **Level II.** An assessment of planning, implementation, and outcome characteristics in all or most of the participating Community Prevention Grants Program communities in six states, performed using data from the Title V Community Self-Evaluation Workbook. These data are used to analyze community-provided impact and outcome information and to provide general implementation information, such as selected prevention strategies and program activity dosage. The proposed sample at Level II was approximately 60 Title V communities across the 6 states.
- ❖ **Level III.** An assessment of the efficacy of the Title V model through intensive case studies of the implementation processes and the links between activities and outcomes in 12 communities (2 in each of the 6 Level II states).²

Using a mixed-method design that included descriptive (Level I), non-experimental (Level II), and case study approaches (Level III), the three-level evaluation design was intended to move from broad descriptions of the Title V program in every community to increasingly detailed investigations of program implementation and outcomes (figure 1.2). The approach was also intended to build the capacity of the sites, especially at Level III, to conduct their own evaluations.

Figure 1.2: Initial National Evaluation Design



² Twelve sites were initially selected, but one of the Hawaii sites dropped out of the study early in the implementation process. A strained relationship between the site and the unit of local government, concern about the burden of data collection, and the limited resources available to the site, including financial and manpower, finally proved too much for the site, and it withdrew from the evaluation. Given the issues that had already compromised the evaluation and delayed its implementation, it was decided that the evaluation would continue with 11 sites (see sidebar 1.1).

Overall, the initial evaluation design was intended to result in:

- ❖ An ongoing description and characterization of the Community Prevention Grants Program subgrantees in all participating states and territories.
- ❖ An assessment of the extent to which communities were able to implement risk-focused prevention, including an understanding of what planning processes were undertaken by each community, which risk factors were addressed, what prevention strategies were carried out, what target populations were served, and the magnitude and intensity of services provided, in addition to the impact of the Community Prevention Grants Program on hypothesized outcomes.
- ❖ An increased understanding of the processes involved in the effective implementation of the Community Prevention Grants Program model and a test of the theoretical causal links between the risk-focused prevention model and its impacts.

Site Selection

Six states were recommended for inclusion in the Level II and III evaluations. The number of states selected to participate in the national evaluation, and hence the number of subgrantees examined, was initially intended to strike a balance between cost and scientific rigor. To capture the variation in levels of implementation and the associated variation in outcomes, and to increase the generalizability of this assessment to all Title V communities, all subgrants in each selected state would be examined. The choice of design required that the number of states be limited. Examining more states by restricting the Level II evaluation to exemplary communities or to communities that had large grants would not have captured adequately the diversity in the quality of implementation at the community level. By examining this diversity, and by including communities that had been successful in implementing the Title V model, the evaluation team would have an opportunity to gather information about the factors that contributed to or impeded successful implementation.

On the basis of information from state juvenile justice specialists and the U.S. General Accounting Office survey conducted in 1995 and 1996, most of the states could be grouped into two categories: those that contributed additional funding in support of the Community Prevention Grants Program and those that did not. At the time, it was thought that the contribution of state money to develop long-term, sustainable, local delinquency prevention efforts indicated a high level of commitment by the states to the Title V approach. These funds were expected to improve the quality of local implementation and

Sites Participating in the National Evaluation of the Community Prevention Grants Program

Hawaii

City and County of Honolulu (Kaneohe community)

Michigan

City of Holland (West Ottawa County)
City of Novi

Nebraska

City of Norfolk
City of Valentine

Pennsylvania

Northampton County (city of Easton)
Fayette County (city of Uniontown)

Vermont

Town of Middlebury
Town of Windsor

Virginia

Hanover County
Waynesboro and city of Staunton

outcomes by providing additional support for planning and training at the local level. By stratifying the sample of states, the evaluation would be better able to assess the effect of the state context on local implementation experiences and outcomes. For the sample selection process, contributing additional funds was defined as a state's providing a monetary supplement to the Community Prevention Grants Program from its general fund, Title II funds, or other federal block grant funds.

After stratification, five criteria were used to reduce the states included in the Level II and III evaluations to a core group:

- ❖ Current or planned use of the *Title V Community Self-Evaluation Workbook*.
- ❖ Availability of good-quality data on risk factors and juvenile problem behaviors at the state and local levels.
- ❖ Allocation of state funds for evaluation.
- ❖ Commitment to the Community Prevention Grants Program model.
- ❖ High participation levels in training and technical assistance.

From the core group, the recommended states were selected in consultation with OJJDP's State Relations and Assistance Division on the basis of reporting history and willingness to participate in the evaluation. The six recommended states were Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Vermont, and Washington. Because of their participation in other national evaluations occurring at the same time as the Title V evaluation, Ohio and Washington were removed from the list at the request of state representatives and replaced by Hawaii and Virginia.

The number of states selected was to strike a balance between methodological rigor and funding realism. Studying grantees in all participating states and territories would have been prohibitively expensive. The sample of six states was thought to moderate the cost of the evaluation, while maintaining adequate statistical power and including levels of variation in implementation and outcome factors sufficient to investigate the research questions fully.

The Title V national evaluation presented a unique situation for states and communities in that they were not given additional resources for participation. However, they would receive a benefit in the form of additional evaluation training and technical assistance. Early on in the selection process, finding states that met all five of the participation criteria was difficult. Few states were actively using the *Workbook* or had good-quality data on risk factors and juvenile problem behaviors. In addition, at the time, no states had set aside money for evaluation for Title V subgrantees. As a result, the federal stakeholders and the national evaluation team began to consider states less on the basis of their ability to meet the criteria and more on their willingness to participate. Given that the data collection would be somewhat labor intensive for local community members, having participants who were committed to the evaluation for reasons other than financial incentives was important.

The evaluation team tried to ensure that the six states met the criteria, at least minimally, but it did not always have control over which states were chosen. The lack of adherence to the five criteria in

choosing the national evaluation sample ultimately played a role in compromising the initial evaluation design, especially for Level II. It also influenced the modifications that were eventually required.

Modified Evaluation Design

In early 1998, before the national evaluation design was fully implemented, the evaluation team conducted evaluability assessments in each of the six states. An evaluability assessment is a pre-evaluation analysis that helps ensure that an evaluation will be technically feasible and capable of answering the research questions that are important to decisionmakers. Evaluation staff performed several assessment tasks, including, in some instances, visiting a state and its Title V communities to assess the sites' capacity to participate in Level II of the national evaluation. This assessment was very important because it looked at implementation and outcomes on the basis of common measures across sites (i.e., those collected using the *Workbook*). Specifically, these assessments were conducted to determine the extent to which state and community staff could participate fully in data collection activities and included measuring the availability and quality of existing state and local data.

The evaluability assessments were not encouraging. Despite attempts that had been made to ensure that the sample was appropriate to the national evaluation design and activities, several issues emerged from the evaluability assessment findings that pointed to the contrary:

- ❖ **Unfamiliarity with the Title V prevention model.** Many community members representing local Title V initiatives across the selected states had not participated in Title V training and so were unfamiliar with the Title V prevention model.
- ❖ **Unfamiliarity with the *Workbook*.** Most community members and several state staff were unaware of the existence of the *Title V Community Self-Evaluation Workbook*, the primary data collection tool for the Level II evaluation. In addition, communities that were somewhat familiar with the *Workbook* were not using it to collect data.
- ❖ **Lack of local evaluation and data collection plans.** Almost none of the communities had local evaluation plans. They were not tracking risk-factor data or program-specific process or outcome data and had no plans to do so. Some communities were collecting limited process data, for example, documenting the numbers of children served by prevention programs.
- ❖ **Limited reporting.** For all of the states except one, the only required reporting mechanisms for grantees were quarterly and final progress reports that were limited in content. The quality of these reports varied significantly across states.

These findings suggested that, in its initial design, Level II could not be fully implemented in the states chosen for participation. Before modifying the design or the sample, both of which had taken months to finalize and would require additional months to modify, OJJDP program staff, in consultation with the evaluation team, turned their attention to the issue of training and technical assistance. The question became: “Given enough training and technical assistance, could these communities collect and report data, as required by the national evaluation?”

To answer this question and identify potential areas for training and technical assistance, the national evaluation team, in consultation with OJJDP program staff, contacted the juvenile justice specialists in each of the six selected states. The goal was to assess fully the availability, quality, and content of existing data in each state, including:

- ❖ The type of information Title V grantees were required to submit to the state on a regular basis (i.e., descriptive, quantitative, or qualitative data, or some combination of the three).
- ❖ The quality of the information the Title V grantees had been submitting to date.
- ❖ The evaluation challenges with which grantees were struggling the most.
- ❖ The willingness of state juvenile justice specialist to help communities collect and submit data for the national evaluation.

Findings from these discussions were not encouraging. With regard to reporting, in all six states grantees were required to submit quarterly and final reports only. Grantees were held accountable for submitting the reports, but not for the information included in them, which most often was limited to descriptive and budgetary information. In addition, in five of the six states, the consensus regarding the reports was that:

- ❖ The content and quality of the information were not comprehensive (e.g., the information did not cover planning, implementation, and evaluation activities) and it rarely included process or outcome data.
- ❖ The information was rarely consistent across grantees, and frequently did not include data about activities that were presented in the 3-year delinquency prevention plan.
- ❖ The information was often unclear and difficult to understand, and, as initiatives progressed and prevention activities evolved away from original plans, it became increasingly difficult to use progress reports to monitor activities funded under Title V.

The six juvenile justice specialists agreed that grantees did not understand evaluation, specifically, they thought that the Title V grantees did not comprehend the distinction between tracking risk factors over time (impact data) and reporting short- and intermediate-term program outcomes (outcome data), an important distinction in the Title V program model. In addition, many of the communities were not implementing initiatives on a scale large enough to affect risk factors. For example, some of the communities were implementing programs serving less than 100 children or families per year. Such numbers are large enough to show small changes in the children and families participating in the prevention strategies, but they are not large enough to impact risk-factor data (e.g., the number of juvenile arrests for substance use or the rates of child abuse and neglect).

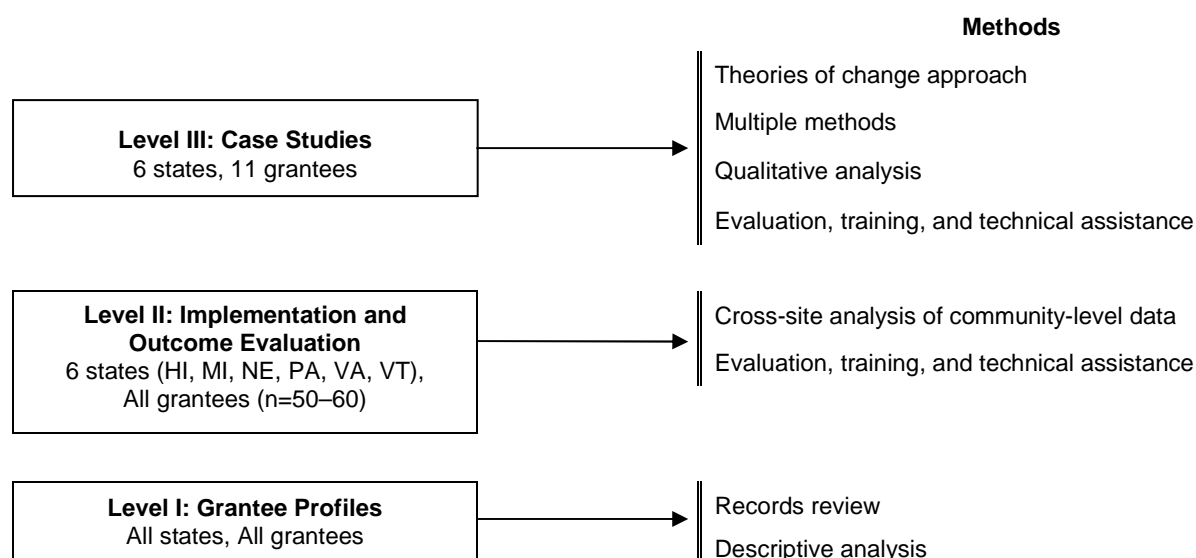
Several of the juvenile justice specialists admitted that they too were challenged by evaluation, especially by the distinction between risk-factor tracking and program evaluation. As a result, they were unsure how to help the local grantees collect data, despite their willingness to do so. In the end, it was clear that, for Level II to be implemented, frequent, intense, and ongoing training and technical

assistance activities would have to take place in each state. Training and technical assistance had been built into the program from the beginning, but not to the extent required to bring the states and approximately 60 communities to the point of participating fully in data collection activities.

In response to the findings that emerged from the discussions with the juvenile justice specialists, the national evaluation team considered developing a training and technical assistance curriculum that would give sufficient attention to evaluation capacity at the local level. It was determined that more than 26 onsite regional training sessions would be necessary to reach the 60 or so grantees in the six states, the sample originally proposed for Level II. In addition, to continue to build evaluation skills and help grantees apply them, followup sessions would be necessary in most of the participating communities. Finally, it would take at least a year to implement the plan fully, but this would delay the national evaluation even further. In the end, OJJDP program staff determined that the resources to finance such an intensive plan were unavailable and that they did not want to wait an additional year before implementing the national evaluation. It was decided that, rather than develop a training and technical assistance curriculum to support the implementation of Level II as it was originally designed, the national evaluation team would modify the initial Level II design.

By the time Level II was to be modified, the six selected states had established relationships with the national evaluation team and, to some extent, had already subscribed to the idea of participating in the national evaluation. As a result, it was decided that the original sample would remain the same. Because Level II was the only component of the initial design that could not be implemented, the team focused its efforts on re-conceptualizing Level II while retaining Levels I and III as originally designed. Eventually, a decision was made to collapse Levels II and III into a multiple-case study design to be implemented with the 11 Level III communities only. Thus, each Level III community became the subject of an individual case study design, with the study as a whole using a multiple-case design. The original data collection activities would remain the same but would be implemented with the smaller sample. The revised plan is illustrated in figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3: Modified National Evaluation Design



The revised plan was acceptable for several reasons. First, the multiple-case study design still allowed the team the opportunity to examine the factors and activities leading to effective implementation of the program model and to positive program outcomes, one of the primary goals of the national evaluation. Second, by having 11 cases in the design, the team could pursue different patterns of replication of the model. The findings from the evaluability assessments suggested that Title V sites possessed characteristics that were both similar and considerably different in relation to the Title V model. In allowing the team to examine both the similarities and the differences, the multiple-case study design would help identify both the conditions under which communities could plan and implement the Title V model effectively and the factors that facilitated or impeded the communities' ability to do so. Finally, the revised plan still allowed the team opportunities to collect process, outcome, and impact data, but for a smaller sample.

Valid reasons existed for accepting the revised design, but several methodological issues were also related to the change. With more than 1,500 Title V communities nationwide, generalizing the findings from the 11 case studies to the larger population would be difficult. Case studies are not expected to generate findings that can be generalized to a large population, however. Rather, they are used to understand the unique experiences of one or several cases in relation to a variable of interest such as the Title V model.

The revised design also posed issues for statistical power, especially in relation to the initial proposal for the Level II design, in which implementation and outcome characteristics were to be examined in approximately 60 communities across the 6 states. The inclusion of all the Title V communities in the six states was designed to capture the variation in levels of implementation and the associated variation in outcomes, and to increase the generalizability of the assessment to all Title V communities. Reducing the sample to 11 cases would not permit this level of assessment.

On the positive side, however, the 11 case studies provided the team with ample opportunities to study processes and outcomes within sites, leading to greater robustness in conclusions. In addition, with Level III intact, the team could still focus on gaining a thorough understanding of the Title V implementation process in the 11 communities, helping to refine the Title V model and assess how different types of communities can best create the conditions necessary for more effective prevention planning and programming. Finally, working with a smaller sample gave the team the opportunity to work closely with the community members at the 11 sites, potentially helping influence the quality and type of data that could be collected.

Selection of Case Study Communities

Once the team had modified the Level II design, it selected the case study sites. With input from OJJDP program staff and the state juvenile justice specialists, along with discussions with representatives from potential communities to determine their willingness and capacity to participate, the team selected two communities from each state. Thus, the team could test the assumptions underlying the Title V model while holding one important contextual condition (the state) constant.

In addition to allowing the national evaluation team to collect process and outcome data at the sites, case studies would allow the team to test the program model under varying contextual conditions by comparing communities across states. Case studies would also permit the collection of rich, detailed

information on the implementation of the initiative, including the processes most needed to develop and carry out an effective, comprehensive prevention model.

Besides input from key federal and state stakeholders and the communities themselves, several other criteria were considered in choosing the potential case study sites. One consideration was the relative level of funding for the initiative in each community. Having participating communities that had sufficient resources to implement an initiative large enough to make a difference and to collect data over time was important. To the extent possible, choosing communities that had participated in Title V training was desirable because the evaluation was designed to assess the effect of training and technical assistance activities on the ability to develop and implement effective prevention initiatives. To be sure that communities had comprehensive plans that included the various components of the Title V model, the evaluation team reviewed the plans of all proposed communities before making a final decision. Finally, the communities had to have demonstrated some initial success in implementing their comprehensive plans, as reported by community representatives and supported by the juvenile justice specialist and OJJDP program staff.

Although the team tried to ensure that the proposed communities met the criteria, at least minimally, it did not always have control over which communities were ultimately chosen. State-level factors often influenced which communities were chosen, regardless of if or to what extent they met the criteria for participation. In Vermont, for example, two Title V communities are funded every 3 years, limiting the pool of potential sites and eliminating the possibility of using the criteria for site selection. In addition, Juvenile Justice Specialists often wanted some part in choosing which sites were selected, if only to ensure that those selected were having some success in implementing the model. In the end, the communities selected varied significantly in relation to the level to which they met the criteria. In some cases, communities had been through training, and in others they had not. Some communities were receiving as much as \$150,000 over 3 years, whereas others were receiving less than one-fourth that amount. Interestingly, the variation proved to be an advantage, as it provided naturally occurring comparison groups, allowing the team to identify factors associated with both successful and unsuccessful implementation of the Title V model. For example, the team found that communities that did not receive training had more difficulty implementing the model than did those that did. Similarly, communities that had a thorough comprehensive plan had the most success in implementation. These issues and others are discussed in detail for each site in the case study presentations, which are found in chapters 2 through 7.

Implementing the National Evaluation Design

Originally scheduled for early 1998, the first phase of the national evaluation was delayed by almost a year because of issues associated with the initial design and its subsequent modifications. The state selection process caused some delays as state representatives (e.g., agency staff and juvenile justice specialists) worked with federal program staff to determine what would be required if their state agreed to participate, and if and how they could support local communities to facilitate their full participation in data collection activities.

In late 1998, the national evaluation team began to work directly with four communities in Michigan and Pennsylvania. Approximately 6 months later, the communities from Vermont and Nebraska were on board and ready to begin working with the team to build local evaluation capacity and start data

collection activities. Finally, in late 1999, after Hawaii and Virginia were added to the evaluation, two communities from each of those two states were chosen for participation.

By late 1999, 11 of the proposed sites were actively engaged in national evaluation activities; however, the one site that was not, one of the Hawaii sites, terminated its participation in late 1999). In general, the staggered start dates for the sites were the result of several factors, including the states' Title V funding cycles (some communities were funded earlier than others) and the time required to recruit sites for participation. Recruiting frequently required that a member of the national evaluation team conduct a site visit to establish contact with community members, introduce the national evaluation, give community members the opportunity to ask questions, and talk with them in general terms about the nature and extent of their participation. The sites and their funding schedules are presented in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Title V National Evaluation Community Funding Timeline

State	ULG (Target Area)	Funding Years					
		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Hawaii	City and county of Honolulu (Kaneohe community)		June	x	September		
Michigan	West Ottawa County (city of Holland)		April	x	x	x	
	City of Novi		June	x	x	June	
	Madison County (city of Norfolk)		July	x	New grant	x	x
	Cherry County (city of Valentine)			August	x	x	x
Pennsylvania	Northampton County (city of Easton)	December	x	x	December		
	Fayette County (city of Uniontown)		January	x	January		
Vermont	Town of Middlebury		July	x	July		
	Town of Windsor		July	x	July		
Virginia	Hanover County (same)			July	x	x	July
	City of Waynesboro (city of Waynesboro and city of Staunton)			July	x	x	July

Note: Nebraska communities are guaranteed funding for only 1 year at a time, so start and stop dates cannot be anticipated. Grants are awarded competitively each year.

In the first year, national evaluation activities focused primarily on building relationships and developing the community members' capacity to engage fully in data collection activities. In the early phases of implementation, the evaluation team visited each community approximately every 6 months, sometimes more frequently if necessary. In general, these visits were used to present an overview of the national evaluation design; foster a shared understanding of goals, objectives, and outcomes of the evaluation; and lay the groundwork for collaboration by the evaluation team and key stakeholders at the state and local levels. More specifically, early activities included:

- ❖ Establishing collaborative working relationships at the state and community levels through frequent and ongoing contact with state staff, state-level evaluators, and community members.

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- ❖ Building the “state context” (e.g., state support for prevention programs, levels of funding, and availability of community technical assistance and training) through interviews with State Advisory Group members, juvenile justice specialists, and other key state-level stakeholders.
 - ❖ Assessing the community by reviewing relevant materials, such as grant applications and program plans; interviewing key players, including prevention policy board members, project directors, and program staff; and appraising existing evaluation capacity and future evaluation support needs.
 - ❖ Building state and local evaluation capacity by conducting technical assistance and training workshops on collecting national evaluation data, the *Title V Community Self-Evaluation Workbook*, and other state-specified evaluation topics.
 - ❖ Developing tools for data collection and management, including a data collection guide, interview protocols, and databases relevant to evaluation data.

All these activities were conducted during the first year. In the second and later years, national evaluation activities were balanced among data collection activities, evaluation training and technical assistance activities, ongoing assessment of the community, and continued collaboration by the members of the national evaluation team with stakeholders at the state and local levels. To support the communities throughout the evaluation process, evaluation team members had frequent and ongoing communication with site representatives by telephone and e-mail, and in person during site visits. Because of their frequency and intensity, these contacts were instrumental in building positive and lasting relationships between community and national evaluation team members and helped facilitate capacity building, especially in relation to evaluation. Data collection varied across sites in terms of quality and quantity, but the commitment to participating did not. Regardless of the challenges they faced, all 11 communities remained fully committed to providing the data they could, and to participating in activities to increase their evaluation capacity to the best of their ability. However, data collection remained a challenge throughout the evaluation.

Because the evaluation capacity of the sites was limited throughout the national evaluation, the collection of data varied across sites in terms of quality and quantity, and they were submitted sporadically. Despite the commitment of the communities and the evaluation team’s efforts, timely data collection and submission activities were an issue throughout the evaluation. In addition, because participation was voluntary and sites were not receiving additional resources to participate in the evaluation, the communities had no external incentive for engaging in timely data collection and submission, and the team did not have the authority to impose consequences on sites that did not fulfill data collection requirements.

To encourage participation to the fullest extent possible, the team adopted a participatory, or collaborative, approach to the evaluation early on in the implementation process:

One of the negative connotations associated with evaluation is that it is done to people. Participatory evaluation involves working with people. Instead of being research subjects, the people in the research settings (e.g., the community members) become co-researchers. The process is facilitated by the researcher or evaluator, but is controlled by the people in the community. (Patton, 2002:183)

This type of approach shifts the framework of the evaluation. Instead of presenting the national evaluation as something being done to the sites, the team presented it as something the sites and the team would do together. This approach is less intimidating than more traditional evaluation approaches and generates much more buy-in from program personnel and other key stakeholders. This leads to more complete and accurate data collection; more clarity about program goals, objectives, and strategies; and increased likelihood that evaluation results will be used to improve current or future programs.

The basic principles of a participatory approach are presented in sidebar 1.2. They were used to guide the following evaluation activities:

- ❖ Identifying and planning the evaluation with key decisionmakers and stakeholders who will use the evaluation information or be affected by it.
- ❖ Using logic models and other tools jointly to map out the key elements of the program, the expected outcomes, and the theory underlying the initiative as a foundation for the evaluation.³
- ❖ Involving stakeholders in the identification and design of local data collection instruments, collection plans, and reporting formats.
- ❖ Developing the community's capacity to collect and interpret data by conducting training sessions and hands-on workshops.
- ❖ Discussing evaluation findings regularly with stakeholders to identify problems, modify plans, and determine how to use evaluation findings to strengthen programs and policies.

During the evaluation, these activities most frequently took place during site visits, which were also used as opportunities for conducting interviews, gathering relevant data, and observing program activities. These visits helped build local evaluation capacity while strengthening the relationships between the national evaluation team and community members. Site visits are discussed in greater detail below.

In addition to securing buy-in and increasing the quantity and quality of data, participatory approaches often have an impact beyond the findings or report that may be generated from the evaluation. Participants are exposed to and acquire skills such as conceptualizing an evaluation plan and data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Principles of a Participatory Approach to Evaluation

- ◆ The community knows best. The evaluator facilitates and supports the activities of the local program and evaluation.
- ◆ The community is responsible for the evaluation, exercises self-determination and autonomy, and monitors its own progress.
- ◆ The evaluation is a collaborative effort between the evaluator and the community.
- ◆ The intended users of the evaluation results (the community) are directly involved in the evaluation.
- ◆ Evaluation information is used primarily for program improvement and decisionmaking.
- ◆ The evaluation recognizes the uniqueness of the community and its local context (e.g., social, political, economic, and cultural characteristics).

³ Logic models are useful because, as graphic representations of programs, they identify and lay out clearly the relationships among program conditions, activities, outcomes, and impacts.

To promote data collection, the national evaluation team first worked very closely with community members to develop logic models of the local initiatives. The logic models were then used to plan and implement a local evaluation or, in most cases, a local data collection plan. Most communities reported that working with logic models was helpful to them when thinking about and managing their local data collection plan.

The national evaluation team worked with community members to develop data collection plans that met the information needs at the local level but also resulted in the collection of data that the national evaluation team could use in the national evaluation. Participation in data collection for the national evaluation was moderate at best, but, without the participatory approach it used, the team feels confident that the data collection would have been compromised even further.

To enhance the participatory, and collaborative, nature of the evaluation, the team was structured to encourage relationship building. Each site was assigned two national team members who worked with the community throughout the evaluation. These relationships provided communities with the support they needed to participate in data collection activities as fully as possible.

Data Collection

To address research questions, the evaluation team developed a comprehensive, multimethod data collection plan for each community. The plan was designed to examine the four key stages of program implementation: planning, implementation, outcome characteristics, and the efficacy of the program model. The data collection plan included qualitative and quantitative data sources, as illustrated in sidebar 1.3. Together, these data provide a framework for understanding both the process and the progress of the Title V initiative in each community.

Data were collected over a 4-year period, during the 3 years the communities were receiving Title V funds and then for 1 year after funding had ended. The quantitative data were collected quarterly for only the first 3 years of the evaluation. The interviews for qualitative data were conducted three times per year for 3 years. Interviews were conducted on site visits, and by telephone at the end of each funding year. In the fourth year of the evaluation, interviews were conducted with project directors and

Data Collection

Qualitative Data Sources

- ◆ Ongoing individual interviews with prevention policy board (PPB) members, community coordinators, and other project staff in the early stages of the initiative.
- ◆ Annual end-of-year process interviews with community coordinators, project directors, and some PPB members.
- ◆ One-time individual end-of-grant interviews with project coordinators or directors and PPB members.
- ◆ Meeting minutes.

Quantitative Data Sources (data collected quarterly via data collection forms)

The Initiative

- ◆ Grant and funding information.
- ◆ Target community description.

Background

- ◆ Past and present
- ◆ Training and other planning activities.

Organizational Structure and PPB

- ◆ PPB roster.
- ◆ PPB member information.
- ◆ Diagrams of PPB.
- ◆ PPB meetings.

Vision

- ◆ Vision beyond Title V.

Budget Information

Programs and Projects

- ◆ Service delivery program description, implementation, and process and outcome assessment.
- ◆ Systems change project description, implementation, and process and outcome assessment.
- ◆ Special event project description, implementation, and process and outcome assessment.
- ◆ Community coordinator project description, implementation, and process and outcome assessment.

Lessons Learned

Risk Factor Tracking

- ◆ Tracking risk factors and indicators.

coordinators and, in some cases, prevention policy board members at 3, 6, and 12 months following the termination of the Title V grant.

Site Visits

Visits to each site were made at least twice per year by two members of the evaluation team. Several sites required more frequent visits because of technical assistance needs. The purposes of the site visits were to conduct interviews, collect and review documents and records, and observe key events (e.g., prevention policy board meetings, significant prevention activities). Before each site visit, the team contacted the project director or coordinator to discuss the nature and extent of the visit and to identify the board members, project staff, local stakeholders, and members of the community who would participate in the interviews. In collaboration with local stakeholders, the team identified a core group of individuals at each site who would be interviewed during each site visit. Generally, this group comprised three to five individuals, mostly prevention policy board members, who were actively involved with the initiative and had been for its duration. Program staff were also interviewed periodically regarding program implementation, including the number of children or families being served, the types of activities taking place, and their assessment of program effectiveness.

In addition to this core group, other individuals were frequently identified to participate in interviews because of their unique perspective, experience, or knowledge of the community. For example, to understand the context for prevention at the local level, in some communities, team members interviewed the state's attorney or other high-level officials regarding their perspective on juvenile delinquency prevention. Similarly, the team might meet with the chief of police or, as was the case in one community, with the local pastor. These individuals were interviewed because they had information about the community that was interesting or important to the local initiative. Generally, because these individuals were not involved directly with the local Title V initiative, they were interviewed only once or twice.

In addition to ongoing interviews, the team conducted end-of-year interviews with local Title V project directors and coordinators. The purpose of the interviews was to assess progress to date; identify challenges to the implementation process, review evaluation activities and plans, and identify future goals, objectives, and challenges. In sites with a particularly involved or knowledgeable board member, that individual might also participate in these interviews. The end-of-year interviews provided the team with a process reflection on each site's Title V experiences.

Submission of Quantitative Data

The national evaluation team requested quantitative data on a quarterly basis, although such data were generally received less frequently. The *Title V Community Self-Evaluation Workbook* was intended to serve as one of the primary data collection tools for process and outcome data. Because many of the national evaluation communities were unfamiliar with the *Workbook*, and the team could not mandate its use, the national evaluation team developed a tool specifically for the national evaluation communities. Based on the design and structure of the *Workbook*, the *Title V Evaluation Data Collection Guide* was designed to provide detailed instructions on the data collection process for the national evaluation, including timetables for submitting data and other helpful resources. It also includes data collection forms for use in gathering and submitting local data to the national evaluation team and examples of the

types of data required by the national evaluation. The *Guide* was made available to communities electronically so they could submit their local data via e-mail.

In addition to data collection tools, the team developed data tracking forms for each community to use to track the data they had submitted and identify data that were still needed. The team sent these forms to communities approximately every 3 to 6 months in an attempt to remind them that the data were due. The *Guide* and the data tracking forms were helpful, but data collection remained a challenge throughout the evaluation.

Despite the best of efforts of the evaluation team, local evaluation plans and data collection posed a significant challenge throughout the national evaluation. Factors related to this issue included the need to train staff to collect data, local priorities that often did not include evaluation, and the lack of financial resources for data collection and analysis. These problems are discussed in detail in the case study presentations (chapters 2–7) and again in chapter 8.

Despite the challenges, however, the national evaluation yielded some very interesting findings that can help other Title V communities and OJJDP understand how the Title V model can be applied successfully at the local level (see chapter 8).

Conclusion

Though initially conceptualized as a project designed to assess the process and impact of the Title V Community Prevention Grants Program, the national evaluation of the program also provided opportunities for learning.

First and foremost, the evaluation provided opportunities to learn about how communities plan and implement local delinquency prevention initiatives. The recorded experiences of the national evaluation communities, presented in chapters 2 through 7, describe in detail how each community negotiated the four implementation stages of the Title V model, including the factors that facilitated and hindered success. These experiences add to the general knowledge about what works in community prevention planning, and also provide information about how different communities embrace the same model and adapt it to their unique circumstances.

Second, the national evaluation provided opportunities, somewhat unanticipated, to learn about evaluation. These opportunities were certainly related to evaluation at the local level, but also to evaluation and related issues at the federal and state levels. For example, before the national evaluation, how much evaluation capacity existed at the state level was not clear. During the evaluation, the team learned that evaluation capacity was limited at the state level and that this limitation often compromised capacity at the local level.

These challenges forced the team, in collaboration with its OJJDP partners, to examine carefully the factors contributing to these challenges and to find ways to resolve them. Progress was made on a number of levels. For example, on the basis of input from the national evaluation team's experiences with state-level staff, OJJDP included, in its regional training meetings in the summer of 2000, sessions on how to write a comprehensive Title V request for proposals, including sections on conducting an evaluation, building state capacity to support local Title V prevention efforts, and enhancing the ability

of juvenile justice specialists and other state-level staff to support local Title V communities in developing and implementing local evaluation plans.

Finally, the national evaluation provided opportunities to learn firsthand about the challenges of evaluating comprehensive, community-based initiatives like Title V. In addition, as the evaluation progressed, so did other national evaluations of comprehensive, community-based initiatives, such as the Drug-Free Communities Support Program and the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. In combination, these national evaluation team experiences can help inform future national evaluations of programs like Title V by identifying what works in terms of methodology, design, and data collection activities, and how best to support communities to participate fully in large evaluation projects.

The remaining chapters of this Report present the experiences of the 11 national evaluation communities and lessons learned from the evaluation. Chapters 2 through 7 present in detail each community's Title V experiences and the state context in which the program operates. The discussion of each community's experiences analyzes the extent to which it was successful in implementing the model and the factors that contributed to its success. Chapter 8 summarizes the lessons learned from the national evaluation. Together, these chapters provide an indepth look at the process by which these 11 communities came to understand and implement the Title V program model, the federal- and state-level factors that both facilitated and hindered their progress, and the lessons that were learned by all throughout the process.